

AVP-AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL

GATHERING 2009

REPORT

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I INTRODUCTION

AVP-Australia is recognised as a network of autonomous AVP groups within Australia that have a common heritage, values and philosophy. National Gatherings make recommendations about issues and activities that are common to or affect groups.

The Annual AVP Australian 2009 National Gathering was held in Canberra from Saturday 10th to Monday 12th January. Nineteen facilitators from the AVP groups in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia attended. The Dinner and Gathering on Saturday evening was held at the Quaker Meeting House in Turner, and the two days of workshop sessions on Sunday and Monday were held at Life Line Training Centre, old Hackett Public School, Hackett

This Gathering was held immediately after Quaker Yearly Meeting in Canberra as a trial to see whether there was representation from more AVP groups and more facilitators. There were not more facilitators present however more AVP groups were represented and more from the small local host AVP group. There was also more of a sense of shared ownership when the Gathering was held in a smaller AVP group with the knowledge that the 2010 Gathering will be held in Adelaide and will come to all state groups regularly.

Other AVP facilitators who came to Yearly Meeting but did not come to the National Gathering reported that they would have come if they had known of the NG'09 location and timing before they made their travel plans. The decision was made to continue the trial, have the next Gathering in Adelaide and in future send out the Gathering information earlier in both the AVP distribution channels and Quaker Yearly Meeting documents in Advance.

We are moving towards the model of having an AVP Australia National Gathering Working Party that would take responsibility for the Gathering organisation. This will make it easier for small local groups who are already busy with the organisation of Yearly Meeting. AVP Canberra reported that having NG'09 worked well for them and they only needed to organise the venue, transport and some catering.

Informal feedback from both those who attended and those who did not, that it is worth while continuing to have annual AVP Australia national gatherings to share experiences, skills and build community. We will continue to investigate further ways of building the AVP Australia community and increase a sense of shared ownership of our community building activities.

This year there were more reports of overseas AVP activities as more Australian AVP facilitators become involved with regional and international AVP activities.

Katherine Smith
AVP-Sydney, NSW, Australia
March 2009.

II MINUTES OF THE AVP AUSTRALIA BUSINESS MEETING held at the AVP National Gathering, Canberra on Sunday 11 January 2009

Present: Sabine (NSW) (**Chair person**), Lesley (Q) (**Minutes**) (Rowe (NSW), Bev (Vic), Margaret (Canberra), Olwyn (WA), Katherine (NSW), Malcolm (NSW), John (NSW & Seattle), Sally (WA), Allison (NSW), Heather (Q), Ken (Nepal & NSW), Anthea (NSW & Seattle), Julie (Canberra), Shobha (Canberra) & David (NSW & Q)

Apologies: NG participants - Laurie (NSW), Rollo (ACT)

1. The Business Meeting agreed that Malcolm would continue as the **AVP-Australia National Contact** person. He is happy to relinquish this if someone else would like to volunteer.
2. Heather, John, Malcolm and Katherine agreed to form **Communication Working Group** until the next National Gathering, to connect AVP Australia and AVP International. Heather and Katherine are to convene and report back. The group will continue to update and communicate through AVP Australia network. They will establish security protocols.
3. Katherine, Shobha, Heather, Sabine, Jo and Jeff (from SA) are to form a **National Working Group to plan the next National Gathering**. Sally will seek volunteers from WA, Bev from Victoria.
Working group to provide task descriptions
4. Heather, John, Sally, Katherine and Ken are to form a **Working Group for the International Gathering 2010**. They will communicate with and involve Asia-West Pacific region.
5. **Application for funding from Quakers**: Agreement at National Gathering 2009 that requests for funding be submitted to Aletia Dundas or Malcolm. Katherine to email members to advise this. The Quaker Peace and Justice Fund requested that AVP prioritise requests for funding before they are submitted.
6. States – WA Olwyn is to distribute information about the **WA accreditation for AVP Youth**.

Other Business

7. **Community building** – John will write an article for distribution
8. Group agrees that members can be **acknowledged by full name in manuals** once their permission has been given. This amends the previous agreement.
9. Katherine reported that, further to the last National Gathering, contact has been made with our AVP neighbours. An **Asia-West Pacific** regional listserv has been formed to exchange information, build community and assist in the organisation of the next International Gathering. This invitation was accepted by the International Gathering 2008 with Nepal as the focus country with the potential participation of the rest of the

regions. Our Asia-West Pacific Region has been acknowledged by the International Conference 2008.

10. An **AVP-Prison Working Group** will be created to promote the integrity of AVP, exchange of experience and best practices, open to AVP-Australia Prison facilitators, with at least one from each prison group.

Minutes - Lesley (AVP-Q)

III SOME SUGGESTIONS AND NEWS ITEMS

A) BUILDING AN AVP OZ COMMUNITY

There was a suggestion that there be an AVP community building phone network throughout Australia. Participating facilitators could be divided into small groups, preferably of 3, who would regularly (each 2 or 4 weeks) have conference calls to keep in touch. Possible agendas could be 1) What's on top?, 2) AVP events/ideas/visions and 3) Support needs.

B) PACKS OF AVP RESOURCES

There was the suggestion that AVP International could consider preparing packs of resources for AVP workshops and distribute these to developing AVP groups, especially those in the developing world.

C) CONFLICT PROFILES

There was a suggestion that AVP review a United Nations sponsored mapping of conflict profile in each country and find out the appropriate place for AVP in each country. This mapping is being conducted commercially by Peter Woodward.

D) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF QUAKER CONTRIBUTION

Katherine (AVP Sydney) acknowledged the financial contribution from Quakers in 2008. Sabina noted that she had thanked the Quakers at the Yearly Meeting on behalf of AVP Australia.

There has been a significant level of support from Quakers internationally for AVP worldwide.

E) AVP RADIO INTERVIEW

On 7th January 2009 John Michaelis was interviewed about AVP on Dove radio, part of the Canberra Community radio network. Dove Radio has limited coverage, about 14,000 listeners. John talked about what AVP is about and it's genesis, the International Gathering, AVP in Nepal, the Australian presentations at the AVP-USA National Gathering, AVP Community, Prison and School workshops, and Trauma Healing and Reconciliation workshops.

IV NATIONAL GATHERING SESSIONS

DAY 1 SATURDAY NIGHT 10 January 2009

SESSION 1 (Day1)

	Arrival & Registration [5:00-9:00pm]
	Set up [4:00-5:00pm] * Allocation of roles
1	Welcome – <i>Sabine (AVP-NSW Prisons & Blue Mts)</i> * Revision of program agenda * Inclusion of AVP-Q agenda items on empathy * Logistical items – computer & travel
2	Dinner – <i>provided by AVP-Canberra</i> [5:30-7:00pm]
3	Gathering – My name, AVP group & one lovely thing I would like to share
4	Report 1 AVP card of world facilitators – <i>Sally (AVP-WA)</i>
	Report 2 AVP USA National Gathering 2008 – <i>John, Katherine, Anthea (AVP-Sydney)</i>
	Report 3 AVP in Nepal – <i>Ken (Nepal), John, Katherine, Malcolm (AVP-Sydney)</i>
	Report 4 AVP International Gathering 2008 in Kenya – <i>Sally, John, Ken</i>
	Closing: Group Hug (outside)
	Community Clean Up

DAY 2 SUNDAY 11 January 2009

K&K	Progressive Pairs [9:00 am] <i>Good activity to fill and build community while waiting for late comers</i>
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Session 1 (Day 2) Allison & Laurie (AVP-Sydney)

1 - A	Welcome
2 - A	Gathering: My name and an acknowledgement of what is happening for me right now
3 - L	Affirmation Names
4 - L	L&L: Frogs & Crocs
5 - A	Assertive Responses

Morning Tea

Session 2 (Day 2) MAPPING THE BIGGER PICTURE OF DIFFICULT DYNAMICS IN COMMUNICATION – David & Sabine	
1 - S	Welcome & introduction
2 - D	Gathering: My name & a communication dynamic between facilitators and me which challenges me is
2 - D	Dynamic Dynamics
3 - .	L&L: Pattern Ball
4 - .	Underlying Anger in relationships <i>Could be a good activity for an Advanced workshop</i>
5 - .	Tree of Wisdom <i>Only time to discuss not to experience</i>
6 - .	Session Reflection
7 - .	Closing: Wishing well – a word that you can take away
Lunch []	
SESSION 3 (Day 2) TREE OF LIFE - Ken	
1	Introduction and background
2	Tree of Life
3	Forest
4	Storms
5	Effects of storms
6	Responses / Dealing with storms
7	When there are no storms
8	Session Reflection
9	Close
Session 4 (Day 3) BUSINESS MEETING [4:00 -5:30pm]	
Dinner - outside	
Demonstration of Wikis	

DAY 3 – Monday 12 January 2008 [9:00am – 4:00pm]	
SESSION 1 (Day 3) EMPATHY [9:00] Heather & Lesley (AVP-Q)	
	Gathering: My name and what empathy means to me
	Empathy discussion: * A challenge I am working on * I feel * I am coping with these feelings by
Morning Tea	
SESSION 2 (Day 3)	
1	Gathering: My name and what's on top
2	Brainstorm – what next <i>Decided what to include in the rest of today's agenda</i>
3	AVP state issue – group discussion [til 12:00]
SESSION 3 (Day 3) AVP & ROLE-PLAY WITH INFLUENCES FROM RESTORATIVE PRACTICES - Anthea, John, Katherine & Ken (AVP-Sydney)	
1 - .	Welcome & Agenda
2 - J	Pair Share
3 - Ke	Hassle Lines
Lunch	
4 - .	Welcome back
5 - J	I Messages
6 - A	L&L: What Cha' Doing
7 - A/Ka	Role-play
8 - Ke	Unanswered Questions <i>We expected that this activity would relate to the Influences of Restorative Practices Session. However the group decided that they wanted a general discussion about facilitation</i>
9 - KK	Session Reflection
Afternoon Tea	
<i>The group decided to miss a break and finish earlier</i>	
	NG'09 Ungathering
	NG'09 Feedback
	Environmental Sculpture
	Close:
COMMUNITY CLEAN UP	

V NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

To illustrate the importance of non-verbal communication with a role play

Facilitator asks for two volunteers and gives them instructions outside the training room; the volunteers enter the room and carry out the role play while others watch

1. Give the situation to the volunteers and then the instructions. The situation-*two old friends meet after many years and talk about old times. While they are talking, they start arguing which becomes a big conflict, and soon they are shouting at each other angrily. Then they find a way to resolve the conflict and they end as good friends again.*

Instructions:

2. The participants use NUMBERS instead of words, counting from 1-100, but giving verbal expression and tone like in a real dialogue.
3. By the time you reach 50 in your 'dialogue' you should be in the middle of the argument-shouting and gesturing at each other. By the time you reach 100, you should be enjoying each other's friendship once again
4. one actor begins (1, 2, 3)... and the other continues (4, 5, 6, 7...). All numbers are spoken in sequence without repetition and with the same emphasis as in a normal discussion. Emphasise this to the actors
5. when the volunteers are ready, the facilitator returns to the group and says that the role play will follow in a moment
6. the volunteers should enter the room; going to opposite ends of the room, then they meet in the middle and begin the role play
7. allow the role play to proceed
8. give applause to the volunteers

Then ask participants:

- ☐ What was the story?
- ☐ How did they know the story, since the actor spoke no words? (Tone of voice, volume, eye contact, gestures etc)
- ☐ What does this exercise tell us about non-verbal communication? (Non-verbal communication is as clear and powerful as spoken communication)
- ☐ What is a major complicating factor of non-verbal communication? Mixed messages: when we say one thing and mean something else with our non-verbal communication. Discuss this...

Ken (AVP Nepal & Sydney)

From: UNICEF peer support training programme manual, 2004

VI FIRST EVENING SESSION PRESENTATION NOTES

1 AVP CARD TRAVELS THE WORLD – Sally (AVP-WA)

- Sally reported that it was agreed at the 2008 AVP-International Gathering to accept the AVP-New York offer of having a card go from Greenhaven Prison to 8 different AVP groups around the world to be signed (by as many AVP facilitators as possible) and returned to the 2009 AVP-USA National Gathering in New York in May. One of the places the card will go will be to Sally in Perth, Western Australia
- Sally (AVP-WA) requested AVP Australia facilitators at the NG'09 sign a piece of paper and she will attach the paper into the card while it is in Perth
- Card will be presented to AVP-USA National Gathering 2009

2 AVP-USA NATIONAL GATHERING, May 2008 – John, Katherine & Anthea (AVP-Sydney)

John reported

- John was the Master of Ceremonies at the Gathering
- There were 160 registered participants for the 5 day Gathering
- There were many mini workshop options
- There were a significant number of the released inmates amongst the participants
- John, Anthea and Katherine presented three sessions
 1. AVP in Australia – a taster of things Australian including the influence of Restorative Practices like restorative listening and restorative debriefing
 2. Dynamic manual writing – demonstrated wikis and collaborative manual writing
 3. AVP-USA Youth Committee presentation. Katherine and John were members of the Committee's review of the relationship between AVP-Youth and HIPP. The group effectively uses cheap international conference calls for their committee meetings

Katherine reported

- AVP-USA is very prison focused. It has a hierarchical structure – with local state groups > regional groups > AVP-USA committees > Committee of Committees at the top
- K has joined AVP-USA Youth, Communication and Education Committees and some AVP International committees like the Education committee
- Manuals - K provided an overview of the manual revision process
- Wikis - K provided an overview of the progress of the wikis

Anthea – confirmed that Australia 'wowed' them!

Malcolm – commented that if 10% of NSW community facilitators are interested in facilitating in prisons, this means that prison-only groups could be losing up to 90% of potential AVP facilitators

Q – How does USA train prison facilitators?

A (John) – provided insight into the training process for both 'inside' & 'outside' facilitators. Many USA groups are short of facilitators

Q – How do prison facilitators stay on track and don't drift?

A (John & Katherine) – There is a heavy reliance on manuals / there is some drift / Many prison groups have a regular 10 minute meeting (Sat morning) which feeds back to planning

Q – Why did USA see difference between HIPP and AVP-Youth? What did Americans think of Australian model?

A (Katherine) – USA accepted that the Australian model was well developed & established

A (John) – provided an overview of HIP history in USA re political & historical issues

A (Katherine) – K was surprised to find that HIP doesn't exist as entity/network like AVP. The workshops occur with HIPP trained people using the HIPP manual

3 AVP NEPAL REPORT – Ken, John, Katherine, Malcolm

- Ken provided an overview of the historical development of AVP in Nepal
- In Nepal there has been 10 years of insurgency before a peace treaty was signed
- In 2007 Nepalese man Subhash, meet Australian AVP facilitator Aletia Dundas in Switzerland. Aletia described AVP and Subhash was interested in an AVP program for Nepal
- Katherine linked Subhash and Ken (an AVP(NSW) facilitator living in Nepal) by email. They met and discussed establishing an AVP program in Nepal
- They started with monthly mini workshops
- Ken and Subhash organised two Basic workshops in April 2008 with Ken and John as facilitators The workshops were held a week apart, were in English and had 15 participants each
- this lead into a workshop blitz of 8 workshops in 16 days in August/September. The facilitators were Ken, John, Aletia, Katherine, Malcolm and some Nepalese apprentice facilitators
- The program left 30 new facilitators and one experienced facilitator, Ken, in Nepal
- Workshop participants included CEOs, lawyers, reporters and school personnel

Q: How was AVP received in Nepal?

A (John) – Participants felt that workshops were beneficial

A (Katherine) – we had to evolve a workshop style to suit the local cultural differences

The group members felt empowered to translate for each other so everyone could understand what was being said

A (John) – adapted the Concentric Circles activity, with the people in the inner circle speakers of one language & multi lingual participants in the outer circle. This way speakers of one language would always talk with a multi-lingual speakers

A (Katherine) – The whole program was carefully designed as a cohesive training program. Because almost everyone would be a new facilitator together everything had to be explicitly taught at some time during the workshop series.

A (John) – there is some very powerful sharing on the discussion listserv set up for the new Nepalese facilitators to support each other

John provided feedback on the end of workshop gatherings & noted how enthusiastic and energised participants were. John noted that at the last workshop session the members of the new AVP Nepal developed a vision with balanced agendas, no caste discrimination and a range of areas of development including schools/community/prison, in the cities and in the countryside.

Ken and Katherine each gave radio interviews in Kathmandu about the program. Overall John was impressed that series of workshops had sown the seeds of nonviolence and community change within this core of seed facilitators.

4 AVP-INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN 2008 IN KENYA – Sally, Ken and John

Sally

- Told a story of the International Gathering welcome circle and a kookaburra laugh!
- There were 120 people at the Gathering and it was beautiful to hear everyone sing 'Donna Nova Parchea'!
- Sally stated this song was a pivot moment for her after hearing so many horrendous stories of personal violence people had experienced
- S was inspired by the number of workshops and facilitators in war torn countries
- S recounted stories of her involvement in AVP workshops held both before and after the Gathering
- S discussed the issue of quality control and how facilitators are paid. The lead trainers get much more money than the other facilitators
- She described different interesting Gathering sessions, business meetings and the guest speakers
- S attended the session about youth workshops in Kenya
- S talked about the usual AVP-WA HIP agenda
- Sally participated in a workshop in a Kenyan slum area. She was moved by the participants' stories of how violence affected their lives. She was surprised that role play themes were heavily focused on marital violence ie. husbands cheating on wives, despite the many other forms of violence impacting on them. Maybe this is linked to the fear of the spread of AIDS. A Pastor spoke up and advised husbands to have one wife. In this culture husband can have 4 wives
- Tribalism – Sally reported on the effects of tribalism and recounted a story about a spontaneous women's march with a message of the importance of being part of Kenya rather than just a member of a tribe

Ken

- Reported on his participation in a hybrid workshop of AVP activities & trauma healing. The workshop encouraged participants to build community, and then to talk about the effects of violence & trauma at personal level

John

- Reported on participating in a peace workshop
- It was the 2nd workshop held in church, between 2 warring groups in the post election violence
- There was a balance in number of people from each tribe. John reported that the barriers were broken down during the workshop and by end of workshop there had been reconciliation. The group planned to work on the reconstruction of damaged property together. They invited a member of parliament and local chiefs to meet with them at the end of the workshop so there would be a community commitment to their plans. John reported that this was one of the most powerful workshops he had ever been involved with
- He reported that it was worth the effort involved to adapt AVP in these environments

Q - Was it a precondition for participants wanting to heal? Can you identify specific processes/activities which provide a difference to workshop outcomes?

A (John) - acknowledged that he is not an expert in this area. He felt however that elements like the participants being volunteers and the careful balancing of numbers of people from each side contributed to the success of the workshop. He was conscious of the deep hurt felt by many of the participants

- The facilitators worked to allow time and space for participants to share their stories and provide the opportunity to hear each others very emotional stories. The process involved initially same tribe groups sharing their stories then in the 2nd stage mixed groups shared with each other. Most of this sharing was done in the beginning sessions of the workshop
- All facilitators came from outside the area and therefore were seen as impartial
- There is a trauma healing manual available online.

Q - Did it make much difference that facilitators had not experienced trauma?

A (John) – The lead facilitator had trauma experience, however John believed that the workshop may still have worked without this

Q – Is the power of grief a common human experience?

A (John) – The facilitators were skilled in allowing a shame process to occur. It seemed that they allowed the shame process to run a natural course and were unaware of the Restorative Justice process

Q – Is there safety and willingness to allow participants to work through shame in a safe environment?

A (Ken) – He did not feel that there was a safe environment for sharing in the workshop he attended, however much sharing was achieved. They couldn't make it safe in western terms and maybe that is OK!

Q - This sounds like a blending of restorative processes and AVP?

A (John) - noted that there was a lot of lecturing in the African learning style

Q - Perhaps there was increased safety in the less experiential learning process when dealing with trauma?

A - By AVP Australia standards there were too many participants in the workshops, but healing occurred and there were positive outcomes

Olwyn (AVP-WA)

VII REFLECTION ON THE NATIONAL GATHERING - BRAINSTORM

- Have shorter days
- Stick to plan
- Have space in the agenda to add extra things that come up
- Have a bit more cohesion, use a workshop format, sometimes there was no sense of cohesion putting together a workshop
- No team cohesion before the Gathering
- Time for discussion too limited. There was not enough time for the value from the debrief and afterwards, issues and learning to come out
- Saturday evening was a leisurely time, we introduced ourselves then we had content
- Business meeting should be optional
- Would like all to have a camp with everyone at the same place – community building grows from us being in the same place – with more time to connect with people
- The talk and discussion was most powerful. Useful learning for Leader Training workshop
- Regret that there was no community building process first
- The organisation of the Gathering needs more time and effort rather than what one person can do
- Issues are still unresolved, though a lot was done
- Not necessarily have reports on the first night
- Venue, have all stay together – like in school camps
- What is the purpose – sharing ideas, sharing issues and meeting people
- Business meeting holds us together. This is AVP Australia
- We need to have representatives from each state
- Purpose? If we are going to upgrade we need to take the ideas back to the rest of AVP Australia
- Immensely rewarding and confusing
- My learning style – it is clearer why we come together. It helps me choose what I will participate in
- Experience it, design the debrief in detail – then unpack it – and consciously know the element of what we were trying to do